

Washington, D.C. - Continuing her commitment to increase accountability and fiscal responsibility in Washington, Congresswoman Melissa Bean has reintroduced her Congressional Accountability Initiative for 2009, which would increase legislative transparency and chart common-sense fiscal solutions.

“Congress is tackling unprecedented challenges and producing numerous, complex solutions,” Bean (IL-08) said. “Our electorate wants to remain engaged, but needs access to the voting records of their elected officials to keep up with all of our work. And our budgeting process and priorities need to reflect a pragmatic and fiscally-responsible approach towards the long-term fiscal health for our nation.”

Last night, Congresswoman Bean introduced H.Res. 287, the Voting Record Transparency Resolution. Currently, the House Clerk only organizes representatives’ votes by Roll Call number. This makes it difficult for constituents to easily access their representative’s voting record. Similar to legislation she first introduced in 2008, this bipartisan bill would change the House rules to require the Clerk, who already maintains a database of Congressional voting records, to sort such data by representative and make it accessible from each representative’s publicly-funded official website.

“Democracy works best with an engaged and informed electorate. Congress can and should work harder to facilitate that,” Bean said. “Right now, it’s easier for American citizens to get a consumer guide that compares home appliances than it is to compare their representative’s voting record to their own priorities. This bill provides the kind of transparency that will change that.”

The second bill is H.R. 1557, the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Commission Act. Bean joined bill author Rep. Jim Cooper (TN-05) in introducing the bill earlier this month as an original cosponsor.

With annual government deficits expected to top \$1 trillion, the federal government’s financial position can only be improved through systemic reform to government programs. The SAFE Commission Act establishes an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate reforms to our nation’s entitlement programs and federal budgeting process. Congress would be required to introduce and pass legislation to implement the commission’s recommendations, or an alternate plan, within 90 days or lose budgeting authority.

“While spending is needed in the short term to stimulate the economy and stabilize the financial system, systemic reforms are necessary to get our nation on track to long-term fiscal responsibility,” Bean said. “We cannot continue to place the nation’s fiscal burden on our children and grandchildren.”